

Illocutionary Analysis of PPPA Minister's Press Response to Bekasi Train Accident

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Abstract

This study analyzes the illocutionary speech acts found in the statements of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection regarding the Bekasi commuter train accident. The objectives of this study are to identify the types of illocutionary acts used in the Minister's spontaneous interview responses and clarification statements, analyze their functions based on John Searle's classification, and examine how the context of public communication influences meaning construction. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method, with data collected from television interviews, press statements, and clarification posts uploaded through the Minister's official social media account. The findings reveal that assertive acts are the dominant type, appearing 3 times (37.5%), followed by directive and expressive acts with 2 occurrences each (25%), and commissive acts with 1 occurrence (12.5%), while no declarative acts were identified. The dominance of assertive acts indicates that the Minister mainly used language to provide explanations, clarification, and factual information regarding the incident and the related policy response. In addition, directive acts functioned to offer suggestions and encourage collective awareness, expressive acts conveyed sympathy and apology, and commissive acts reflected institutional commitment toward the victims. The study also shows that spontaneous interviews and clarification statements create different patterns of meaning construction, where spontaneous responses tend to be more immediate and less structured, while clarification statements appear more formal and controlled. Therefore, this study confirms that language in public communication functions not only as a means of conveying information but also as a social act that shapes public perception and institutional credibility in crisis situations.

Keyword: Illocutionary Acts, Speech Act, Press Response, Spontaneous Interview, Accident Discourse

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of political communication in Indonesia demonstrates that language plays a crucial role in shaping public perception, particularly during crises or events that attract national media attention (Sutrisno, 2024). The language used by public figures serves not only as a means of conveying information but also as a social act that can influence how the public understands an issue (Muna & Ausat, 2023). In this context, every statement made by government officials carries a broader layer of meaning beyond its mere linguistic structure (Suparman & Septiadi, 2021).

The incident that is the focus of this study occurred on April 27, 2026, at 8:50 p.m. WIB, when a commuter train accident in the Bekasi area drew government response and media attention. In response, the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, Arifatul Choiri Fauzi, proposed placing women in the middle of the train and men at the front and rear as a temporary measure to reduce crowding and potential conflict in public transportation. This policy is intended to enhance safety for female passengers, who are often vulnerable to harassment and discomfort in public transport settings. However, a critical view argues that gender-based segregation does not guarantee safety, as risks can still occur in any situation regardless of passenger position. Thus, such arrangements are mainly administrative and preventive but cannot fully guarantee passenger safety in all situations (@kompastv.indonesia, 2026). Following the public reaction and controversy surrounding her statement, the Minister later delivered a clarification speech to explain the intended meaning of her proposal and respond to public criticism. Therefore, this study analyzes both the Minister's initial statement and her

clarification speech as forms of spontaneous public communication that reflect dynamic illocutionary functions and meaning negotiation in media discourse.

In linguistic studies, language is understood as an act that not only conveys literal meaning but also performs a function within a social context (Rahayu & Brawijaya, 2021). This concept was first introduced by J. L. Austin, who explained that an utterance can be analyzed through three dimensions: what is said, the action performed through the utterance, and the consequences resulting from the utterance (Austin, 1962). Of these three aspects, the illocutionary act is the focus of attention because it is directly related to the speaker's intention within a communicative context (Setiawan & Djajanegara, 2021). This concept was further developed by John Searle, who classified illocutionary speech acts into five main forms: assertive, directive, expressive, commissive, and declarative, each of which describes the function of speech in social communication (Austin, 1962).

A number of previous studies have examined illocutionary speech acts in various contexts of public communication (Sidiq, 2019). A study in the Elysian Journal analyzing Hillary Clinton's speech found that the speech acts used in the speech were dominated by the assertive form at 45.45%, followed by the directive form at 27.27%, the expressive form at 18.18%, and commissive forms at 9.10%, indicating that political speeches tend to function as a means of conveying information and persuasion that has been structured systematically. The study also showed that the illocutionary functions in the speech were dominated by convivial functions at 75% and collaborative functions at 25%, suggesting that formal political communication follows a relatively stable and controlled pattern (Kangin, 2021).

Another study conducted in the context of media and communication texts at Mataram University also showed that illocutionary speech act analysis tends to be performed on documented data, with results indicating a dominance of the assertive and expressive types in the analyzed texts (Pratika & Simatupang, 2025). Furthermore, another study examining speeches using Geoffrey Leech's politeness approach indicates that speech acts in one-way public communication are more frequently used to maintain social relationships between the speaker and the listener (Rangkuti et al., 2022).

Although these studies have made significant contributions to the study of illocutionary speech acts, there is a fundamental difference between them and this study. Previous studies have generally focused on structured data such as political speeches, media texts, or pre-prepared lectures, in which speech patterns tend to be stable and predictable. Furthermore, most of these studies do not involve the dynamics of direct interaction between the speaker and the interlocutor in the context of spontaneous communication. This has resulted in a lack of research examining how illocutionary acts function in unplanned media interview situations, where utterances may contain pauses, corrections, or irregularities that actually carry significant pragmatic meaning.

Unlike previous research, this study focuses on the analysis of illocutionary speech acts in the context of press responses or live interviews between the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection and journalists regarding the KRL accident in Bekasi. The primary focus of this study is not only on the classification of illocutionary types but also on how spontaneous utterances in the context of public communication can reflect more

dynamic language functions and be influenced by the unfolding social situation. Furthermore, this study also positions public policy issues related to gender and transportation as a social context that influences the interpretation of the utterances' meaning.

Based on this, this study aims to analyze the types of illocutionary speech acts found in the statements of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, identify illocutionary functions based on Searle's classification, and understand how the context of spontaneous interviews influences meaning-making in public communication. Thus, this study is expected to contribute to the field of pragmatics, particularly in understanding language as a social act that operates in real, dynamic, and contextual situations within the public sphere (Mawaddah et al., 2025).

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method to identify and analyze speech acts, specifically illocutionary acts, found in the statements of the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) regarding the Bekasi commuter train accident. This method was chosen because the study focuses on understanding the meaning, context, and communicative intentions embedded in the statements rather than on measuring numerical data (Yohana et al., 2025). This approach also allows the researcher to analyze how illocutionary acts emerge in spontaneous public communication and media interactions (Rewai & Junaid, 2021). The objective of this study is to identify the types of illocutionary acts used in the minister's statements, determine the most dominant types, and analyze their functions

based on John Searle’s classification of illocutionary acts, namely assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. According to Searle (1979), illocutionary acts refer to the speaker’s intended meaning behind an utterance.

The data in this study were taken from two types of statements delivered by the Minister of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection regarding the Bekasi train accident. The first data source consists of the minister’s spontaneous responses during television interviews or press statements related to the incident, while the second data source consists of clarification statements uploaded through her official Instagram account. The data were collected using a note-taking technique by repeatedly watching and reviewing the videos and clarification posts from online sources, then transcribing the utterances into written text (Diffani et al., 2023). The transcripts were then analyzed to identify and categorize each utterance based on its illocutionary function (Yulian & Mandarani, 2023) In the analysis process, the researcher classified the utterances using John Searle’s theory and organized the findings into tables to determine the frequency and dominant types of illocutionary acts. Through these steps, this study is expected to provide a deeper understanding of how language functions as a social act in spontaneous public communication and how public officials use language strategically in responding to social issues and public concerns.

3. Result and Discussions

This section presents the results of the data analysis in this study. The findings are divided into two points. The first point aims to address the first research question, namely to identify the types of illocutionary acts

present in the press statements and clarification statements issued by the Minister of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA) regarding the KRL accident in Bekasi. The second point aims to analyze the functions of these illocutionary acts based on the classification proposed by John Searle.

This study employs the speech act theory proposed by John Searle (Searle, 1979), which classifies illocutionary acts into five types: assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative. Based on the analysis of data obtained from spontaneous interviews between the Minister of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection and journalists, as well as from the Minister’s clarification statement, the types of illocutionary acts identified in this study are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Types of Illocutionary Acts

Types of Illocutionary Act	Frequency	Percentage
Assertive	3	37,5%
Directive	2	25%
Commissive	1	12,5%
Expressive	2	25%
Declarative	0	0%
Total	8	100%

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the dominant type of illocutionary act found in the Minister's statements is assertive, with a total frequency of 3 data or 37.5%. This indicates that the Minister primarily used language to provide explanations, clarification, and factual information regarding the incident and the related policy response. Meanwhile, directive and expressive acts appeared with the same frequency, followed by commissive acts. No declarative acts were found in the data.

1. Assertive

(Data A1) "Iya, tadi kalau kita ngobrol dengan KAI itu kenapa ditaruh di paling depan, paling belakang supaya tidak terjadi rebutan."

This utterance falls under the category of an assertive illocutionary act because the speaker conveys information that is considered true based on their knowledge and experience. In this case, the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection explained the rationale behind the policy of placing women-only carriages at the front and rear of trains, which was based on discussions with KAI.

According to (Searle, 1979), assertive illocutionary acts serve to state something the speaker believes to be true. The function of this utterance is to provide information and clarification to the public regarding the policy that has been implemented. Additionally, this utterance also demonstrates the speaker's effort to foster public understanding of the policy, thereby reducing the potential for misunderstanding.

In the context of an impromptu interview, the use of this assertive illocutionary act also indicates that the speaker is striving to provide a quick and factual response to the journalist's question. This reflects how language is used as a tool to maintain credibility and transparency in public communication, particularly in situations that attract media attention.

(Data A2) "Kita semua sepakat bahwa keselamatan seluruh masyarakat adalah prioritas nomor satu baik perempuan maupun laki-laki."

This utterance is categorized as an assertive illocutionary act because the speaker states something that is believed to be true and generally accepted by society. In this case, the Minister emphasizes that the safety of all passengers, regardless of gender, should become the main priority in public transportation policies. The statement was delivered as a clarification following the controversy surrounding her previous statement about the placement of women-only train carriages.

According to Searle (1979), assertive illocutionary acts function to express the speaker's belief regarding a certain condition or fact. The function of this utterance is to provide clarification and reaffirm the government's position that public safety applies equally to all citizens, both women and men. Through this statement, the speaker attempts to correct public misunderstanding and reduce negative interpretations that emerged after the earlier interview.

In the context of public communication, this utterance also reflects how language is used strategically to restore public trust and maintain institutional credibility. By emphasizing equality and collective safety, the Minister positions herself not only as a policymaker but also as a public representative who seeks to reassure society during a sensitive situation. Therefore, this assertive act does not merely convey information, but also functions to rebuild public confidence and social stability.

(Data A3) “Saat ini prioritas utama pemerintah adalah memastikan penanganan terbaik bagi seluruh korban, baik yang meninggal dunia maupun yang mengalami luka-luka.”

This utterance is classified as an assertive illocutionary act because the speaker provides information regarding the government’s current priorities in handling the train accident. The Minister explains that the main focus of the government is the treatment and protection of all victims affected by the tragedy.

Based on Searle’s theory, assertive acts are used to convey statements that the speaker considers factual and truthful. In this context, the utterance functions to inform the public about the government’s immediate response and responsibility toward the victims. The statement also aims to direct public attention toward humanitarian concerns rather than continuing public debate about the earlier controversial statement.

Furthermore, this utterance demonstrates how assertive acts in

institutional communication often function to maintain transparency and accountability. Through this statement, the speaker attempts to show that the government is actively responding to the crisis and prioritizing the welfare of the victims. In the context of crisis communication, such utterances are important because they help strengthen the image of governmental responsibility and responsiveness in the eyes of society.

2. Directive

(Data D1) “...tapi dengan peristiwa ini kita mengusulkan kalau bisa gerbong perempuan itu ditaruh di tengah, jadi yang laki-laki di ujung...”

This utterance is classified as a directive illocutionary act because the speaker is attempting to influence another party to perform an action. In this case, the Minister of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection proposed a change in the placement of women’s train cars in response to the accident that occurred.

According to Searle’s classification, directives are used to encourage the addressee to do something. This utterance falls under the “suggesting” category because it is not presented as a direct command but rather as a solution-oriented recommendation. The function of this utterance is to offer a solution to the existing problem and to demonstrate a policy response to the crisis situation.

In the context of spontaneous public communication, this directive illocutionary act also reflects how

speakers not only convey information but also play an active role in shaping policy direction through language. This demonstrates that utterances in interviews are not merely informative but also performative, that is, they have the potential to influence concrete actions in the social world.

(Data D2) “Mari kita bersama-sama memusatkan perhatian pada penanganan korban, doa, serta upaya perbaikan sistem keselamatan transportasi publik agar tragedi serupa tidak kembali terjadi.”

This utterance is categorized as a directive illocutionary act because the speaker encourages and invites the public to focus on collective actions related to the victims and transportation safety improvements. In this case, the Minister attempts to direct public attention away from controversy and toward recovery efforts and future prevention.

According to Searle’s classification, directive acts are intended to encourage the hearer to perform certain actions. The utterance above belongs to the category of inviting because the speaker uses the phrase “Mari kita bersama-sama,” which indicates collective encouragement rather than direct command. The function of this utterance is to create solidarity and encourage society to unite in responding to the tragedy.

In the context of public communication, this directive act also reflects how language can be used to shape collective awareness and social responsibility. The Minister not only provides information but also attempts to influence public attitudes

and encourage a more empathetic and constructive response to the incident. Therefore, this utterance demonstrates that language in public discourse can function as a tool for social mobilization and collective action.

3. Commisive

(Data C1) “Kementerian PPPA berkomitmen memberikan pendampingan psikologis, perlindungan, serta dukungan yang diperlukan...”

This utterance is classified as a commissive illocutionary act because the speaker expresses a commitment to carrying out future actions related to the victims of the train accident. In this case, the Minister states that the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection will provide psychological assistance, protection, and other necessary support, particularly for children and families affected by the tragedy.

According to Searle (1979), commissive illocutionary acts function to bind the speaker to a future course of action. The utterance above reflects the government’s intention and responsibility to take concrete steps in assisting the victims. The function of this utterance is to assure the public that the government is not only expressing sympathy but is also committed to providing real support and protection for those impacted by the incident.

In the context of public communication, this commissive act

also demonstrates how language can function as a form of institutional responsibility and public assurance. Through this statement, the speaker attempts to build public trust by emphasizing that the government is actively involved in handling the consequences of the tragedy. Furthermore, the use of the word “berkomitmen” indicates a strong sense of obligation and seriousness in responding to the crisis, which strengthens the credibility of the institution in the eyes of society.

4. Expressive

(Data E1) “Pertama-tama saya menyampaikan duka cita yang mendalam atas insiden kecelakaan kereta yang telah menimbulkan korban jiwa dan luka-luka.”

This utterance belongs to the category of expressive illocutionary acts because the speaker expresses feelings of sorrow, sympathy, and empathy toward the victims and their families. In this statement, the Minister begins her clarification by conveying condolences as a response to the tragic event that caused deaths and injuries.

According to Searle (1979), expressive illocutionary acts are used to express the speaker’s emotional or psychological condition regarding a particular situation. The function of this utterance is to show empathy and emotional concern toward the victims and affected families. Through this statement, the speaker attempts to create an emotional connection with

the public and demonstrate compassion as a public official.

In addition, this utterance also reflects the importance of emotional sensitivity in crisis communication. In situations involving tragedy and loss, expressions of sympathy become essential because the public expects not only factual explanations but also humane responses from government representatives. Therefore, this expressive act functions not only as an emotional expression but also as an effort to maintain public trust and demonstrate social responsibility.

(Data E2) “Untuk itu, saya memohon maaf sebesar-besarnya kepada seluruh masyarakat...”

This utterance is categorized as an expressive illocutionary act because the speaker expresses apology and regret regarding her previous statement, which was considered inappropriate by some members of society. In this clarification, the Minister acknowledges that her earlier statement may have caused discomfort and emotional harm to victims and the public.

Based on Searle’s theory, expressive acts are used to express the speaker’s feelings or attitudes toward a situation. In this case, the utterance functions as an apology intended to repair social relationships and reduce negative public reactions. By apologizing directly, the speaker demonstrates awareness of public criticism and takes moral responsibility for the controversy that emerged.

Furthermore, this utterance also highlights how apology functions as an important strategy in public communication, especially during crises. Public officials are expected not only to explain their intentions but also to acknowledge mistakes when necessary. Therefore, this expressive act serves not merely as a personal emotional response but also as a communicative strategy to restore public trust, maintain institutional image, and reduce social tension following the incident.

Based on the results of this analysis, this study successfully achieved the objectives outlined in the introduction, namely identifying the types of illocutionary acts in the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection's statements, understanding the functions of each illocutionary act based on Searle's classification, and analyzing how the context of spontaneous interviews influences meaning formation in public communication.

The findings reveal that assertive acts are the dominant type used in the statements, indicating that the Minister mainly used language to explain, clarify, and provide information regarding the incident and the government's response. In contrast, directive acts were used to propose solutions and encourage collective awareness, expressive acts were used to express empathy and apology, and commissive acts reflected institutional commitment toward the victims.

In addition, this study also shows that the context of spontaneous interviews and clarification statements significantly influences how meaning is constructed and conveyed. The spontaneous interview tended to contain unstructured expressions, repetitions, and immediate responses, whereas the clarification statement was more

formal, organized, and emotionally controlled. Nevertheless, both forms of communication effectively conveyed the speaker's intended meaning to the public.

Thus, this study confirms that language functions not only as a tool for conveying information but also as a social act operating within real, dynamic, and contextual situations. Therefore, this study is expected to contribute to the field of pragmatics, particularly in understanding how illocutionary acts function in spontaneous public communication influenced by ongoing social situations.

4. Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the statements delivered by the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection regarding the Bekasi commuter train accident, this study concludes that various types of illocutionary acts were used in the context of spontaneous public communication and clarification discourse. The findings show that assertive acts were the most dominant type, indicating that the Minister primarily used language to provide explanations, clarify misunderstandings, and convey information related to the incident and the proposed policy. In addition, directive acts were used to suggest solutions and encourage collective awareness, expressive acts were employed to express condolences and apology, while commissive acts reflected the government's commitment to supporting the victims. No declarative acts were found in the analyzed data.

This study reveals that the context of communication strongly influences the construction and interpretation of meaning. The spontaneous interview responses tended to be less structured, immediate, and

emotionally reactive, whereas the clarification statement delivered through social media appeared more organized, formal, and carefully controlled. These differences demonstrate that public communication is highly dynamic and context-dependent, especially in situations involving social controversy and media attention. Therefore, the findings confirm that language functions not only as a medium for delivering information but also as a social action that can influence public perception, build institutional credibility, express responsibility, and shape social responses during a crisis. Consequently, this study contributes to the field of pragmatics by providing a deeper understanding of how illocutionary acts operate in real and spontaneous public communication contexts.

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